

Windows XP Part 2 Managing Files and Folders

Objectives:

- Learn where to store files on your computer, how to use Save As and Save.
- Learn to use Windows Explorer to Move and Copy your files and folders.
- Learn how to Delete, Restore, and Rename files and folders. How to use the Recycle Bin.
- Learn how to Find lost computer files and folders.
- Learn to organize files using folders, to retrieve and copy files and folders from USB drive.



Windows, Part 2 - Tips

File Name Extensions

Every file name is automatically created with a Filename Extension, consisting of a period plus three letters that is added to the end of the file name that you typed in. This extension is used to identify what program created that file. Normally the filename extension is hidden from view when you look at file names. If you want to see them, open Windows Explorer, then click on Tools → Folder Options → View, and remove the checkmark on Hide File Extensions for Known File Types. Common extensions include .doc for a Word document, .jpg for a JPEG photo, .xls for an Excel spreadsheet, .wav for an audio clip, and .pdf for an Adobe Acrobat document. The computer uses this extension to know what program to start when you double-click to open a file. If you want to open the file with a different program, you can right-click the file, then select Open With → Choose Program and choose the program from a list of all the programs on your computer. To make this the default program for that type of file, click on the checkbox that says “Always use this program to open these files”.

Saving a File

When you first create a file, you should save it using File → Save As. You will specify where it is to be saved, and what the filename will be. File names can contain up to 255 characters. You should avoid using the characters / \ : * | < > ? and “ . If you update the file, you must click on File → Save for the updated information to be included in the file.

Where to Store files

Most files on your computer are stored on the Hard Drive, called Local Disk (C:). You can also store files on removable disks like a Compact Disk or a DVD disk, or on a removable USB Drive. When storing data on Local Disk (C:) you should always store your own files in the My Documents folder, or other designated user folders like My Pictures, My eBooks, My Music, or My Videos. Files can also be stored on the Desktop. This is handy if you need the file only temporarily.

Using Windows Explorer

Open Windows Explorer by holding down the Windows key, and then tap the letter E. Windows Explorer shows only Disks and Folders in the left column, only Folders and Files in the right column. The items in the Right column are those located within the Disk or Folder in the Left column that is Selected (dark blue). You can open a file by double clicking the file in the right column of Windows Explorer.

Viewing Files in Windows Explorer

The default view in Windows Explorer may be set to show additional information (such as a pie chart of disk space used) within the right column. This cuts down on the room available to see the list of files and folders. There is no need to show this information, since the same info can always be seen by right clicking on the file, folder, or drive in question, and click on Properties. You can maximize the room available for displaying the files by clicking on Tools → Folder Options → General → Use Windows Classic Folders.

You can click on the Views menu to select your desired view of the files and folders in Windows Explorer. The Details view gives the most information about each item

shown. (See Figure 2) You can sort the list by clicking on the column header that you want to sort by. For example, click on the Date header to sort by date. Once you have created your personal preferred way to view, you can make that the default view for all other folders by clicking on Tools → Folder Options → View → Like Current Folder.

Moving or Copying Files using Windows Explorer

To move files from one location to another, (other than to a CD) first select the file(s) you want, then drag them using either the Right or Left mouse button. If you use the Right button, you will get a menu from which you can choose to either Move the file, Copy the file, or Cancel. If you use the Left mouse button, you will automatically do a Copy if going from one Disk to another Disk; you will get a Move if going from one folder to another folder on the same disk.

To select all the files shown, click on Edit → Select All. To select a series of files that are all in a row, click to select the first file, then hold down the Shift key and click on the last file. It will select all the files from the first to the last. To add to or subtract from a list of files that are already selected (shown in dark blue), hold down the CTRL key while you click on the files that you want to add or remove from the selection.

Deleting Files using Windows Explorer

To delete a file, just click on the file to select it, then click on the big, graffiti-style “X” at the top of the window. When you delete a file from the hard disk (C:), it goes to the Recycle Bin, where it stays until you empty the Recycle Bin. **Note:** Files deleted from a CD, DVD, or USB drive do not go to the Recycle Bin. They are completely removed and cannot later be restored.

Using the Recycle Bin

Double click the Recycle Bin shortcut on the desktop to open it. It will show a listing of all deleted files which are now in the Recycle Bin. To restore a deleted file, select the file you want. Now click on File → Restore. The file will automatically be returned to the folder from which it was previously deleted.

To empty the Recycle Bin, open the Recycle Bin, then click on File → Empty Recycle Bin. Once you have emptied the Recycle Bin, the deleted files are permanently removed from your computer and can no longer be restored.

Using START menu to Find a File on your computer.

To find a file, click on START → Search → For Files and Folders. Type in part of the file name, and specify where to search. If you don't know where the file is stored, then search the entire Local Disk (C:). If you know the file is in a particular location, such as My Documents, then click the window called Look In, and select the location.

Using START menu to Open a Program or Document

To open a program, click on START → Programs → click on program icon. To open a recently saved document, click on START → Document → click on the document name. (Note - the list contains only the 15 or so most recently used documents.)

Organizing your Files using Folders

If you have only a small number of files, you can conveniently store them all in the My Documents folder. As you accumulate dozens or hundreds of files, it is best to organize them by using Sub-Folders within the main My Documents folder. To create a new folder, first select the folder that you want the new folder to go into. For example, click on the My Documents folder. It will turn blue, indicating that it has been selected. Now click on File → New → Folder. Another folder will be created, with the name New Folder already selected and ready to be renamed. Immediately type in the new name and hit Enter. The new folder is now ready for use. You can move existing files into the new folder following the Move instructions above, or you can create new documents and save them directly into the folder.

Viewing sub-folders in Windows Explorer

When you first open Windows Explorer, it shows a listing of drives and the My Documents folder in the left column. Those drives or folders that have sub-folders have a small plus sign (+) in a box to the left. To display the next level of folders within the folder hierarchy, click on the plus sign. The plus sign will change to a minus sign (-) and the list will expand to show what folders are one level down. Any folders which have further sub-folders will once again have a plus sign in a box at the left. Click on that plus sign to go one level further down. If you want to close the display of sub-folders, click on the minus sign. (See figure 1).

Using a USB Drive

To use the USB drive, simply plug it into an open USB port. The operating system will detect that the USB drive has been added, and will assign a letter (such as E or F) to it. Files can be added, deleted, renamed, etc. from the flash drive just like from a hard drive. When you want to remove the flash drive from the computer, click on the “Safely Remove Hardware” icon (green arrow above a small rectangle) in the lower right corner of the screen. A tiny window will open saying “Safely Remove Storage Device” (or similar nomenclature). Click on it. A window will appear saying it is safe to remove the device. Remove it by simply pulling it out from the USB port.